

1921  
H43



**THE AMERICAN LYCEUM**

BY

**CHARLIE BROWN HERSHEY**

**B. A. University of Illinois, 1914**

---

**THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the**

**Degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**IN EDUCATION**

**IN**

**THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

**OF THE**

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS**

**1921**



1921  
443

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

192

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY  
SUPERVISION BY Charlie Brown Hershey  
ENTITLED The American Lyceum

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF Master of Arts

[Signature]  
In Charge of Thesis  
[Signature]  
Head of Department

Recommendation concurred in\*

[Signature]  
[Signature]  
E. H. Cameron

Committee  
on  
Final Examination\*

\*Required for doctor's degree but not for master's



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016

<https://archive.org/details/americanlyceum00hers>

## PREFACE

The source material for a study of the American Lyceum is found largely in the American Journal of Education, 1826-1830, and the Annals of Education, 1830-1839. Several references are made to the movement in the Common School Journal, 1839-1848, and in the Connecticut Common School Journal, 1838-1842. Subsequent articles on the subject have been taken very largely from the sources indicated above. The bibliography indicates the material used, and the extent of the investigation for this study, but the treatment in chapters II, III and IV is based almost wholly on the earlier American Journal of Education and the Annals of Education. The statements and interpretations of later secondary works have been given careful consideration.

C. B. Hershey





## CONTENTS

### I. Educational Conditions in Early Nineteenth Century.

#### 1. School Conditions

- a. No Central Authority
- b. The District System
- c. The Academies
- d. Schools not regarded as institutions or agencies for a moral and intellectual process and progress

#### 2. Education Societies

- a. First Society about 1796
- b. Common School Societies
  - (1) State Societies
  - (2) Local Societies
- c. Mutual and Practical Societies
- d. Publishing Societies
- e. Societies were of the people

### II. Historical.

#### 1. Josiah Holbrook and the American Lyceum

- a. First Lyceum in 1826
- b. Growth of the Movement

#### 2. The National or American Lyceum

- a. Organization
- b. Annual Meetings, 1831-1839

#### 3. A National Educational Convention

#### 4. Summary

### III. Organization and Program.

#### 1. Organization

- a. Officers
- b. Objects
- c. Society Programs
- d. Groups in Lyceums
- e. Lyceums for Groups

#### 2. Nature of Societies and their work

- a. Lyceums in Middlesex County, Massachusetts
- b. Visit to Lyceum Meetings
- c. Nature of the Institution

#### 3. Summary



#### IV. The American Lyceum and Popular Education

##### 1. Educational Program

- a. Objects of Lyceum Stated by Holbrook
- b. National Educational Convention
- c. Educational Topics in Lyceum Meetings

##### 2. Testimonies to Educational Program of Lyceums

- a. By Contemporaries
- b. By Later Educational Writers

##### 3. The Lyceum and the American Institute of Instruction

##### 4. The Lyceum and the Common School Revival

##### 5. Testimony of Mann and Barnard

##### 6. Summary and Conclusions

#### Appendixes

##### I. The Modern Lyceum and Chautauqua Movement

- 1. List of Lecturers

##### II. List of Lyceums

- 2. List of Men Associated with the American Lyceum

#### Bibliography



## Chapter I

### Educational Conditions - Early Nineteenth Century.

The many education societies of the early years of the nineteenth century testify to two conditions: first, there was an unsatisfactory educational program; and, second, there was a deliberate and persistent demand for better opportunities for moral and intellectual advancement. There had been progress in education from the earliest New England settlements, but the forward movement was relatively slow. Many arts had advanced with comparative rapidity. Industry and commerce had not asked in vain for the favorable consideration of the people, for men schooled themselves to become leaders in almost everything that affected the condition of the people. But teachers and schools waited almost in vain for a benevolent and generous support of their peculiar interest. There was agitation, a cry, but frequently no language but a cry. However, as years passed, the voice became more articulate and finally succeeded in calling with sufficient clarity to secure the outstanding educational revival of the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century.

Perhaps the most conspicuous fault of the age, a fault of omission, was the lack of any centralized and responsible school authority. Acting upon the provisions of those early units for education,- the school district,- each local community sought to establish educational privileges in what was considered an economical way. This meant a limited term of school, a poorly qualified teacher who would go from one district to another to teach, remaining in each during such time as the poverty or prejudice of the people of the district would permit. This educational convenience became an established and accepted educational program. It was written into law in Massachusetts in 1789, and





later, in 1817, these emergency school and social units became corporations with all the authority suggested by that term. Educationally, these small units were practically independent in questions of money, teachers, school programs, and all other matters. The situation just indicated was strikingly true in Massachusetts, and Martin, in his *Evolution of the Massachusetts Public School System*, calls the situation, "The high-water mark of modern democracy, and the low-water mark of the Massachusetts school system."

The districts became centers of political activity, and the cause of education suffered accordingly. The location and size of the school house, the employment or retention of a teacher, an item of repair to building or furniture, became a district question, and frequently children remained in ignorance while factions gave heated expression to their demands for justice, and for what they considered a proper consideration of their rights. And the district, being a law unto itself, presented a variety of procedures as numerous as the districts themselves. Other interests than those mentioned above suffered likewise and for the same reason. One writer on education in reviewing the period under consideration, pays his compliments to the educational provision of the time by saying: "There was nothing like an educational system in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At that time there were four or five colleges, here and there a private academy or fitting school, and elementary schools of indifferent character in the cities and the thinly settled towns."<sup>1</sup>

Another bad result of the exclusive local administration and supervision was manifested in the use of school texts. There was no uniformity. Horace Mann reported that in Massachusetts more than three hundred different kinds of texts were used in the public schools. No one had authority to say what books should be used, hence, the people, and especially the children, were the victims of

---

1.A. S. Draper, *American Education*, p.17.





the publishers whose interests were sales and not education. Then, too, there was no program of study adopted for a succession of years. Each teacher was a law unto himself and adopted and used the program that met most fully his educational ideals, or, perhaps more truly, his educational limitations. School programs changed with a change of teachers, and a change of school texts followed the advent of a superior salesman of that particular commodity.

Out of this chaotic and undone condition there developed an educational agency that proved to have in it the elements both of a blessing and a curse. The academy, as a distinct institution, has a respectable history in American educational development. It came in response to a demand on the part of some of the clearer minds for an educational institution of merit. The leaders in any activity in that day were not satisfied with the offerings made by the public free schools. They demanded better opportunities for their children. Accordingly, men and women of means and culture engaged themselves in the establishment of semi-public academies. These were for the children of parents who could afford to pay a tuition fee, and the living expenses away from home. There were definite advantages in these schools. The student body was selected, the buildings were better than most of the district school buildings, the teachers were selected with greater care and on a saner educational basis, the curriculum was more extensive and richer in quality. However many the advantages of the academies, Mr. James Gordon Carter pointed out that they tended to emphasize class distinctions, and to draw a much needed influence and support from the free schools. The theoretical democracy provided for in the self-sufficient district led to a practical class condition, and the effort to make every man feel responsible for education by the creation of small districts led indirectly to a condition that took from the districts the most wholesome influence and the sanest moral support.<sup>1</sup>

1. Old South Leaflets No. 139.



Another reason for the educational limitations of the times, not of minor importance, but one that perhaps did not receive the consideration it deserved, was the fact that education, as such, was not a subject of study in any formal sense. Men and women were taught, but they were not taught to teach, and, consequently, they went into the school room with subject information, but without professional skill. The colleges and universities had no departments of education or courses in pedagogy. The school as a district social institution, and education as a deserving and commanding interest, were scarcely dreamed of. The inevitable prevailed; the school was a kind of place for the dissemination of a body of facts, and not the agency of a moral and intellectual process and program.

But the period under consideration was marked by an unusual activity demanding educational improvement. Henry Barnard, in the American Journal of Education, says that: "Towards the end of that period, and during the succeeding decade, the ferment wrought so actively as to generate a numerous, heterogeneous brood of systems, plans, and institutions - many crude and rudely organized; many that did their work quickly and well; few that have survived in any form till the present time."<sup>1</sup> Anna L. Custis makes the following observation of the period: "Along in the first quarter of the century just closed, education, always a fad of the Americans, suddenly became a hobby. All sorts of societies were organized over night, societies for the diffusion of useful knowledge, mercantile associations, teachers' seminaries, literary institutes, book clubs, societies of education - every sort of society whose name sounded learned and educational. Few of these outlived the first ten years, and some died at the time of their birth."<sup>2</sup> Some of these many societies were definitely organized

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 14, p. 535.

2. From A Brief History of the Lyceum in Who's Who in the Lyceum, 1906.





to advance the cause of public, free schools. Others were designed for practical and popular education among adults. Still others combined the two rather distinct objectives, and sought by regularly appointed public meetings and the press to disseminate useful knowledge to adults and to conduct a propaganda for better common schools.

There seems to be no occasion in this connection to enter into a lengthy discussion of these several agencies for culture and intellectual advancement. However, it is desirable to mention a sufficient number to indicate more fully the specific objectives set before them. In the annals of Education under the heading, "Origin of School Associations," is the following statement: "The first associations in New England for the improvement of common schools - so far as we have been able to learn from authentic documents, - was formed about forty years ago, in the county of Middlesex, in Connecticut. We have in our possession, a code of Regulations for the government of Common Schools..... They were drawn up, as we believe, by the first president of the association, the late Rev. Wm. Woodbridge, father of the editor of this Journal, and for more than half a century a teacher."<sup>1</sup> This voluntary school society not only drew up a "Code of Regulations", but presented them to the visitors and overseers of schools in the county for their consideration, and, if they saw fit, for their adoption.

A Boston School Society was organized in 1827 "to extend the advantages of education to all the children of the poor in this city." This was a local society and was created to meet a local need arising from the influx of working people from various quarters, and particularly from abroad, which brought a numerous class of uneducated children. The following observation was made by the society relative to the city school system: "The city arrangements do not

---

1. Annals of Education, Vol.6,p.474; the date was 1836.



and cannot embrace the instruction of such children."<sup>1</sup>

The Hartford Society for the Improvement of Common Schools refers to the common schools, or education, as a "moral engine of social happiness and political security." This society grew out of a recognition of the defects in the common school program. The recognition, however, was of general defects, and the society proposed to conduct a campaign of inquiry and investigation to ascertain specifically the nature and extent of the defects. It was scientific in its procedure.<sup>2</sup> The plan and program of the Hartford Society is elaborated in a later volume of the same journal.<sup>3</sup> The article urges the importance of organizing societies for the improvement of education, and suggests lines of investigations to be followed by these societies as follows:

1. Early Education and Infant Schools
2. Primary Schools
3. School Visitors and Inspectors
4. Text books
5. Importation of European Methods
6. Lectures for Teachers
7. Tracts for Propaganda Purposes.

The Ohio State Society for Public Instruction announced the following object: "To improve and multiply the common schools of the state, and to obtain well qualified teachers." The governor of the state was the first president. It was hoped to have auxiliary societies in every county, "collecting the statistics of the schools, suggesting improved methods of teaching, and the best books for use." <sup>4</sup>

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.2, p.315.

2. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.2, p.378.

3. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.3, p.78.

4. Annals of Education, Vol.6, p.182.

the state  
at books for



The Illinois Institute of Instruction was organized at Vandalia, Illinois, February 13, 1833. This society presented a list of twenty-two questions to be submitted to friends of education, teachers, and preachers of the gospel. The questions dealt primarily with common school education, and a few sought information relative to libraries and general culture. The institute was to have annual meetings, and branch associations in counties and towns were to be a part of the organization.<sup>1</sup>

The Florida Education Society had auxiliary societies in cities and counties.<sup>2</sup>

In 1831 the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Schools, through its council, resolved to form and establish a collection of works in the department of education. This was done in anticipation of the establishment of a general system of public schools by the legislature of the state. A committee was appointed to examine all books and report on the intrinsic merits of each treatise, and its adaptations to the operations of public schools.<sup>3</sup>

It was reported in 1831 that school conventions were held in the twelve counties of Vermont, in several counties in Massachusetts and New York. "At nearly every meeting the citizens manifested much interest, intelligence, promptness of action, unanimity, and simplicity in the measures adopted."<sup>4</sup>

The societies mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs are a few of many similar societies of the early years of the nineteenth century. In some respects they were like educational associations, institutes, and conventions today, but there is this significant difference, that, whereas, we now have as members of such organizations only teachers and a few others who are directly related to the educational activities of the state and nation, at that time the membership and attendance were not so limited. Frequently reference was made to the

1. Annals of Education, Vol.3, p.185.

2. Annals of Education, Vol.2, p.94.

3. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.5, p.236.

4. Annals of Education, Vol.1, p.126.



"friends of education," when teachers and school officials were not in the minds of those making the reference. The people sought better opportunities for intellectual training and mental development, and they, through their leaders, expressed their desires in the many voluntary, representative societies for the advancement of common schools.

In many instances attempts were made to supplement the meager offerings of the common schools by societies for mutual and practical instruction. Among the several organizations of this character were those known as Mechanics' Institutes. This particular organization had a definite European background. Professor John Anderson, professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, bequeathed his valuable philosophical apparatus, museum, and library for the purpose of popular education. A mechanics' class was organized in the Anderson Institute which was chartered in 1796. This class and a similar movement in the gas-light company of Glasgow were in a flourishing condition in the early twenties of the nineteenth century. In 1821 a few gentlemen in Edinburg began a movement for lectures to mechanics on the mechanic arts and chemistry. A library was provided. The lectures were to be twice each week for six months. A society was formed in London in 1824, and lectures were delivered on Chemistry, Geometry, Hydrostatics, Application of Chemistry to the Arts, Astronomy, Electricity, and the French language. About one thousand belonged to the institute. There were similar institutions in almost every town in England of ten thousand inhabitants or more, and in some of much smaller numbers.<sup>1</sup> The celebrated geometrioian and astronomer, La Place, addressed a letter to the president of the London Mechanics' Institute in which he commended the organizations very highly.

Mechanics' Institutions were formed in Paris under the direction of Baron Charles Dupin, and in other cities of France by some learned professors.<sup>2</sup>

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 1, p.34.

2. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 1, p.251.





It seems that they were very popular in France as well as in Great Britain and Ireland. In 1829 the Massachusetts Journal reported that they were established in ninety-four towns in France, and that recently they were introduced into Germany.

The Mechanics' Institutes in America were very similar in organization and purpose to those in Europe. They were organizations of adults for "mutual instruction in the sciences as connected with the mechanic arts."<sup>1</sup> The chief feature of the public meetings of the institutes was a lecture in familiar form and terminology on the theory of mechanics, natural philosophy, chemistry, or some other helpful subject for mechanics. Horace Mann, in his third annual report, mentions eight mechanics institutes in Massachusetts. And, again, in the Common School Journal, 1842, he speaks of the superior advantages offered to young apprentices in the mechanics' institutes "with their familiar lectures upon the sciences, illustrated with apparatus." In addition to the formal lectures in these societies, all the members were urged to ask questions and to enter into an informal discussion of the subject presented.

Another kind of society for the diffusion of useful knowledge devoted its efforts to publications. Through the printed page an attempt was made to impart useful and helpful information. The object of the General Knowledge Society indicates rather fully the ends sought by the publishing organizations. It was the "publication of approved works with special regard to their moral and religious tendency, but will include works on moral, religious, historical, scientific, and miscellaneous subjects."<sup>2</sup> In the general societies subjects of a controversial and exclusive character were carefully shunned.

In the first copy of the Youth's Companion, April 16, 1827, school im-

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.2,p.187.

2. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.1, p.56.



provement is given as one of the subjects which the new publication was founded to discuss helpfully. On the third page of that same issue there appeared an article, "Hints on Education," And ever since 1827 that interest has found continuous expression.<sup>1</sup>

The American Education Society whose interests were represented in its publication, The Quarterly Register, was designed for the purpose of assisting financially young men who desire to prepare for the ministry. Five hundred and fifty-seven young men from nineteen states and territories and from four or five different denominations were assisted by the society. They were aided in sixty different educational institutions.

In addition to the societies indicated above and many others of a similar character, the period under consideration marks the beginning of an educational literature in periodic form. Chief among the few was the American Journal of Education, 1826-1831, which was succeeded by the Annals of Education, 1831-1839. These journals constituted a part of the propaganda for better and bigger opportunities in education.

Altogether the demand was sincere and widespread. It was a period in which were mingled two of the three necessary steps to secure a desired public goal. It was a time of agitation and investigation, and this was followed logically and inevitably by a period of legislation. There were leaders during this period of propaganda, and to them is due great credit for effecting a change of sentiment and conduct. But great weight was added by the many who became interested through the leaders and formed themselves into groups, societies, etc., to make known in a sort of concerted action the feelings of the people toward an educational reform. At no other time in the history of American education was there such an impact of sentiment springing up, as it were, from the rank and file of

---

1. Lecture at University of Tennessee, Warren Dunham Foster, July 11, 1913.





the people. Subsequent advancement has resulted more largely from the activities of teachers, and educators by profession, but in the early years of the nineteenth century, the leaders were effectively seconded in their efforts by the citizenship in general.



## Chapter II

### Historical.

Among the many agencies designed to advance educational activities in the early years of the nineteenth century, the American Lyceum occupied a prominent place. It developed from inconspicuous origins, but grew rapidly and prospered during a period of about fifteen years beginning in 1826. The founder and promoters were ambitious and planned a sort of universal conquest of ignorance and vice. It was part of a general cry for better educational equipment and opportunity. It was rather definite and comprehensive in its program, providing for the moral and intellectual development of all the members of a community.

The founder of the American Lyceum, Josiah Holbrook, son of Col. Daniel Holbrook, of Derby, Connecticut, a veteran of the Revolutionary war, was born in 1788, entered Yale University in 1806, and was graduated in 1810. In 1820 he took charge of his father's farm at Derby, and began a school there in 1824 for the purpose of practical instruction in agriculture, combining actual farming with instruction. It was a private venture, not well backed financially, hence did not continue long. In October, 1826, Mr. Holbrook prepared a statement for the American Journal of Education in which he announced and outlined his plan for "Association of Adults for Mutual Education." In this statement is embodied the plan of the American Lyceum.

In November, 1826, Mr. Holbrook delivered a course of lectures at Millbury, Massachusetts, on subjects in natural science, at the close of which he induced thirty or forty of his hearers, farmers and mechanics of the place, to organize themselves into a society for mutual improvement which, at his request,



was called "Millbury Lyceum, Number 1, Branch of the American Lyceum." The organization of this first lyceum was followed very soon by the organization of twelve or fifteen other town lyceums, and these were then organized into the Worcester County Lyceum. The lyceum of Windham County, Connecticut, and its constituent town lyceums, were also organized shortly afterward.

Thus began the development of the American Lyceum, a movement embodied in a tangible and workable organization. It grew rapidly and extended widely. In October, 1828, some fifty or sixty branches of the American Lyceum had been organized. In 1829 branches had been formed in nearly every state in the Union. In two instances it received the patronage of states with a view to making it a board of education and a means to extend the usefulness of schools. In February, 1829, a meeting was held in the representatives' hall, Boston, consisting of members of the legislature and other gentlemen, to consult upon the state of education in the commonwealth, and on those associations for promoting it, denominated lyceums. It was resolved, "that we regard the formation and success of Lyceums as calculated to exert a conspicuous influence upon the interests of popular education and of literature and science generally, and that it be recommended to the school teachers in the several towns to connect themselves with Lyceums, and form a distinct class or division for their appropriate pursuits."

A convention of the friends of education was held at Utica, New York, on January 13th, 1831, with delegates present from twenty-two counties. Governor Yates addressed the convention. This convention resolved itself into a state lyceum. At the request of the New York State Lyceum, delegates and other friends of education assembled in the city of New York on May 4th, 1831, to organize a National Lyceum. Annual meetings of the National or American Lyceum were held during a period of nine years, closing in a National Educational Convention





in Independence Hall, Philadelphia, November 22, 1839. No record seems to have been left to relate the cause of the rather sudden cessation of activities of the National Lyceum.

The chief historical interest of the movement centers in the annual meetings of the national organization. The following skeleton of facts indicates very briefly the fortunes of the national movement. The place and time of meetings, the number of delegates present, and the president are indicated:

New York, May 4, 1831  
23 delegates present  
President, Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer, Albany, N.Y.

New York, May 4, 1832  
55 delegates present  
President, J. Griscom, LL.D.

New York, May 3, 1833  
75 delegates present  
President, W.A. Duer, President of Columbia College.

New York, May 2, 1834  
64 delegates present  
President, W. A. Duer, President of Columbia College.

New York, May 8, 1835  
50 delegates present  
President W. A. Duer, President of Columbia College.

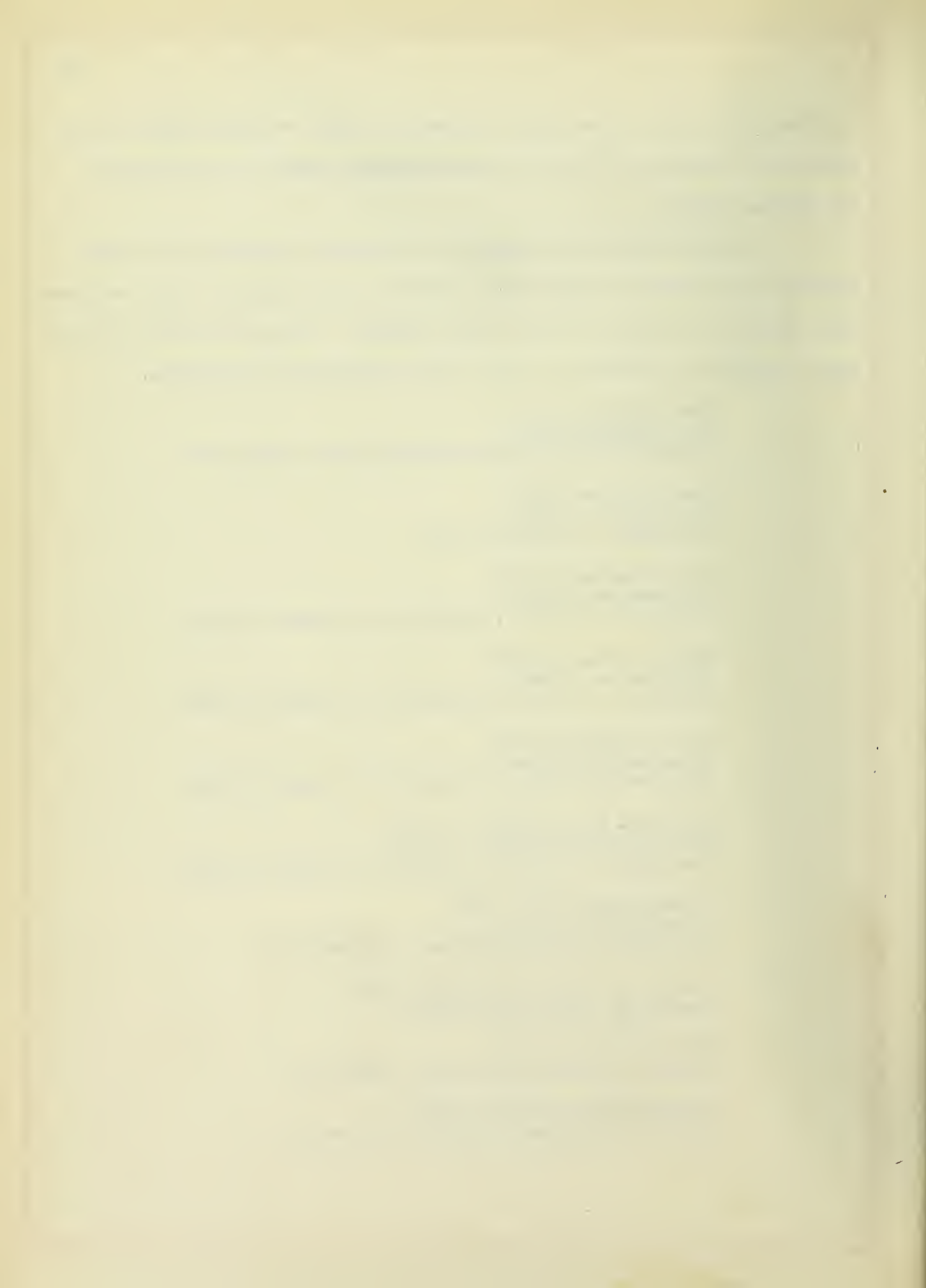
New York, May 6, 1836  
81 delegates and members present  
President, W. A. Duer, President of Columbia College.

Philadelphia, May 5, 1837  
65 delegates present  
President, Rev. G.W. Ridgley, of Pennsylvania

Hartford, Connecticut, May 15, 1838  
Presiding, Rev. T.H. Gallaudett.

New York, May 3, 1839  
Plans for National Educational Convention.

Philadelphia, November 22, 1839  
Meeting of National Educational Convention.





To indicate more fully the character and extent of the American Lyceum as represented in the annual meetings, the following condensed statements are made. As suggested, these do not in any way present the many lines of thought and activity advanced and proposed in the several meetings, but offer rather a guide for an appreciation of the historical aspects of the movement.

In the first meeting the extent of the movement was set forth in the provision made for representation. Every section of the Union was to be represented in the local lyceums already organized or to be organized under the direction of the central agency, and these local societies were then to be represented in the national meetings. This very general representation was to provide a means for collecting information relative to educational activities and general culture, and also to secure a group of interested people in every community who would make an impact upon legislative and administrative bodies for the purpose of advancing educational activities. The lyceum was a voluntary association, or an advisory body, and resorted to no law, nor to any other power but evidence, and the power of motives.<sup>1</sup>

In the second annual meeting a number of pupils from the New York City public schools were examined. This was before the day of mental tests and the determination of mental age by means of tests, but it was a day in which school systems were examined. This examination, like most of those at that time, was to determine the efficiency of the school, and to demonstrate the most acceptable means of advancing children in the ways of learning.

Provision was made at this second meeting to secure permanent moral and increased financial support. An individual might become a life director of the institution on payment of \$100.00; life member on payment of \$20.00; and an annual member on paying \$3.00 annually. The executive committee was requested

---

1. Annals of Education, Vol.1, p.273.



to prepare a monthly paper of four to eight pages for the purpose of circulating information on the subject of lyceums. At about this time Mr. Holbrook began publishing a weekly paper called "The Family Lyceum."<sup>1</sup>

The diversified interests of the American Lyceum are shown in the subjects discussed in the third annual meeting, and, incidentally, the lyceum is shown as a pioneer in certain important fields of culture. Meteorology was discussed, and schools and lyceums were urged to cooperate with the national organization to secure data on this subject. Manual labor, as connected with schools, was discussed, and the conclusion reached that manual labor in schools was a very desirable feature. A report on vocal music as a part of the common school program urged its importance as a recreation and as a means of giving moral and religious instruction. The establishment of a national cabinet of natural history in New York was advocated. Mr. Holbrook advocated a cabinet of natural history for each of the local lyceums. Systematic benevolence in schools and lyceums was recommended. The measures and probable success of the Colonization Society were discussed. The above are only a few of the subjects discussed in the meeting of 1833, but they show that the leaders of the movement were abreast of their time, and, in some instances, ahead of their time.

A report to this meeting from the Boston Lyceum contains the following: "From a comparatively small society, it has become, during the short period of about four years, one of the most popular and useful associations in the city."<sup>2</sup>

The Boston Lyceum conducted an aggressive program of lectures and general discussions.

At the third meeting mention was first made of appointing one or more agents to promote the objects of the lyceum. At subsequent meetings committees were appointed to secure an agent or agents and to provide means for their work,

1. Annals of Education, Vol.2, p.278.

2. Annals of Education, Vol.3, p.345.





but it seems that such agents were never appointed."<sup>1</sup>

In the fourth meeting measures were taken for the extension of the society's operations and connections by the formation of departments and classes of science, literature and the arts. Men of science and letters were invited to cooperate. This departmental idea and organization was carried into the local societies and provided there for group meetings to discuss topics that were particularly related to the interests of the group members.

The establishment of a central school for teachers was one of the outstanding subjects for discussion in 1834. This was not the first time the subject was considered, but it received more serious and extensive consideration in this meeting than at any earlier time. Among other subjects discussed were, The Monitorial System, Corporal Punishment, Natural History and Ancient Languages in the Common Schools.

This meeting urged the importance of closer cooperation among all the local organizations by providing for representation in the annual meetings, either by the presence of delegates or a report on the state and condition of their societies.<sup>2</sup>

Miss Catherine E. Beecher, of Ohio, read an essay before the fifth annual meeting, on The Education of Female Teachers, and it provoked considerable comment favorable to female education in general. A series of resolutions expressed the conviction that the education of women deserved a more prominent place in the thought of American educational leaders.

Resolutions encouraging the lyceum movement in the South were adopted. Arrangements were to be made to hold a special meeting there at a time during the year most convenient to the friends of the lyceum in that part of the country.

1. Annals of Education, Vol.3, p.345.

2. Annals of Education, Vol.4,p.279.





A few of the topics reviewed are with us still and appear in modified form in educational meetings today. Among them are: 1. What improvements are necessary in the laws of the state in relation to common schools. 2. How may our thinly settled districts be best supplied with the means of education. 3. How may the application of science to the arts of life be best taught in the common schools.

Favorable action was taken on reports of educational endeavors in New Granada, and a committee was appointed to ascertain by what means education in New Granada might be promoted by the American Lyceum. Reports were received at different times from other foreign countries, including Mexico, Cuba, Venezuela, and attempts were made to relate the lyceum program to educational endeavor everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

By a provision of the constitution of the American Lyceum the annual meetings were to be held in New York City, but during the year preceding the sixth meeting there was a development that suggested the wisdom of an amendment. There was an unusual growth of interest in the movement in Pennsylvania during the year and the leaders thought it expedient to recognize and encourage the new section by holding the annual meeting in Philadelphia. Accordingly, provision was made by amending the constitution to enable them to hold the meetings "at such time and place as the preceding annual meeting shall have decided."

In this meeting a pronouncement was made on the subject of divisive topics. By a resolution it was provided that no reference was to be made in any reports or essays either to the sectarian peculiarities of any religious denomination or the party politics of the day. If any such allusion appeared, the executive committee was directed to omit the paragraphs containing them. The same sentiment was expressed in reporting the organization of a lyceum in

---

1. Annals of Education, Vol.5, p.267.



Baltimore in which people of all religious faiths and all political parties co-operated for the common moral and intellectual good of the city.

A very clear understanding of what constitutes a normal procedure is evinced in the resolution "that the enactment of wise laws in favor of education is very important, but that popular cooperation is of paramount importance, and may better be in advance of laws than behind them." The foregoing resolution enforces previous suggestions that the movement was of the people, and that it sought to create through the people an insistent demand for better practical and cultural advantages.<sup>1</sup>

Before the meeting in Philadelphia in May, 1837, Congress had provided for a distribution of the surplus revenue to the several states. The American Lyceum at this time, and later, advised that larger expenditure of available funds be made for education. In keeping with that general policy one of the questions discussed was, "What principle should be adopted by a state in appropriating its share of the surplus revenue for the support of education?"

The seventh annual meeting was rather ambitious in presenting a memorial to Congress to make an appropriation to secure simultaneous, extensive, and systematic observations to discover laws which govern the weather. This was urged for the general good, but especially for the benefit of the farmer, mechanic, and mariner.

One other interesting feature of this meeting which is to be found in several of the others, was a self-congratulatory resolution. The conviction was expressed that no institution has ever been established so well calculated to allay party excitements, and to unite all classes of citizens upon the great and important subject of education. The great advantage was to fall also directly to the individual and to the community generally.<sup>2</sup>

1. Annals of Education, Vol.6, p.269.

2. Annals of Education, Vol.7, p.318.





By a vote of the society in Philadelphia, the eighth annual meeting was held in Hartford, Connecticut, in May, 1838. Two rather interesting subjects were discussed at Hartford. First, there was a consideration of the question of the embellishment and improvement of the towns and villages, and the advantage such improvement would be to the cause of intelligence and morality. This program feature in the field of aesthetics is further evidence that the lyceum was a whole-man and whole-community endeavor. Second, the influence of Europe is seen definitely as a part of the thought of the leaders of the lyceum. There was a lecture on "Principles of the Prussian System of education which are applicable to the condition of the United States." An essay and message from Rev. Wm.C. Woodbridge, in Switzerland, were read.

In several earlier meetings the question of Bible and religious instruction in the common schools was considered, and always favorably. The lyceum favored most heartily the free, public school, but the leaders were still under the influence of the religious spell of an earlier day. In this eighth meeting a resolution was adopted expressing the conviction "that the use of the Bible in our popular systems of education, as a text book of moral and religious instruction, is regarded by the lyceum as indispensable."<sup>1</sup>

The ninth and last annual meeting of the American Lyceum was held in New York, May, 1839. Apparently the sessions were devoted largely to a discussion of plans for the proposed National Educational Convention. Professor Charles Brooks of Massachusetts offered the resolutions providing for the convention, and they were maturely considered and unanimously adopted. In no previous meeting did the interest in education seem so comprehensive. This interest is brought out in the list of questions below, many of which are much like the questions discussed, perhaps in a modified form, in educational circles

---

1. Annals of Education, Vol. 8, p. 230.



today. Most of the topics listed in the following questions were discussed in earlier meetings of the lyceum, but at no <sup>one</sup> time were they brought together as in this last meeting. The list follows:

1. How many children are there in each state who, according to the laws of that state, should be under instruction?

2. How many of this number are found in the schools?

3. What is the condition of the common schools in each state?

4. What is the organization of the school system?

5. What branches of knowledge should be taught in our common schools?

6. What should be the character of our common school books?

7. How may school apparatus and school libraries be made most useful?

8. In what branches should instruction be given orally, and in what degree?

9. What should be the qualifications of teachers?

10. Are normal schools (or seminaries for the preparation of teachers) desirable?

11. On what plan should they be established?

12. Is a central normal school for the Union desirable?

13. Should it be under the direction of Congress or a society of citizens?

14. What connection should the common schools have with academies, colleges, and universities?

15. What models for school houses are best?

16. Will a "Board of Education", established by each state, afford the best supervision, and secure the highest improvement of the schools?

17. How can itinerant teachers and lecturers best supply destitute places?





18. Is a national system of instruction desirable?

19. How should a school fund be applied?

20. In what part of each state has the greatest progress been made in elementary education?

21. How may school statistics, which must be the basis of legislation, be most easily collected?

22. What features of the systems now in operation in Holland, Germany, Prussia, France, and Great Britain, may be most usefully adopted in this country?

The above list of questions together with an address to the governors of the several states and the public in general were prepared and reported by Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey, Charles Brooks of Massachusetts, John Grisoom of Pennsylvania, Henry R. Schoolcraft of Michigan, and Theodore Dwight, Jr., of New York.<sup>1</sup>

The National Educational Convention provided for in the ninth annual meeting of the lyceum met in Philadelphia, November 22, 1839. It was ambitious in its program and showed large faith in its askings. Among other resolutions was one asking that the Smithsonian legacy be appropriated at an early date to the cause of education; another resolution asked for the appropriation of money from the sale of public lands for education; still another urged the legislatures of the several states to make early provision for a system of general education whereby free and common schools may be made accessible to all, and the governors of the several states were requested to direct their messages in favor of popular education. State conventions on education were urged, and a general national convention was called to meet in Washington in May, 1840.<sup>2</sup>

After reviewing the several meetings of the lyceum and referring to the

1. Annals of Education, Vol.9, p.421.

2. Amer. Journal of Eduoation, Vol.14, p.535.





educational convention in Philadelphia, Henry Barnard makes the following observations: "This ended, it is believed, as far as all public action was concerned, the operations of the 'American Lyceum.' Under the discouragements and difficulties attending an imperfect organization, want of sympathy and hearty cooperation, want of authority and want of funds, it had done what it could. The defects of the system of which it was a part, and which it advocated, the endeavors to remedy them, and the attendant discussions and experiments, tended strongly to develop and introduce better systems and the use of better means. Out of these early lyceum movements originated many permanent educational libraries and lecture associations, as well as innumerable local improvements in the organization, instruction and discipline of schools, public and private."<sup>1</sup>

No attempt is made here to give the history of any of the local, county, or state lyceums. In Appendix II is a partial list of the societies indicating the location and the special interest of a few of them. However, the foregoing presentation of the activities of the American Lyceum reflects rather fully the interests represented in the meetings of the lyceums in the states, counties, and towns.

No story of the propaganda for better facilities for moral, physical, and intellectual development in the second quarter of the nineteenth century would be complete without a chapter presenting the work and dreams of the American Lyceum. Its annual meetings were held in the centers of influence, and one of the leading educational journals of that time devoted considerable space to its plans and programs.<sup>2</sup> It was a part, and a large part, of that necessary period of agitation and preparation. With lyceums in every state, and a total of about three thousand in the United States in 1834 some appreciation of its influence is forced upon the student of the times.<sup>3</sup> The variety of subjects

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.14, p.535.

2. Annals of Education.

3. Annals of Education, Vol.5, p.470.



discussed and interests espoused, as presented in the foregoing pages, are further testimony of the breadth and sincerity of the promoters of the movement.





### Chapter III

#### Organization and Program.

The American Lyceum flourished before the day of highly specialized societies. The men who promoted its activities looked over almost the entire field of human endeavor and enterprise, and sought to offer mankind an organization that would provide for him not only encouragement but actual benefits for his labor and leisure. According to the pronouncements of the leaders of the movement, man is capable of entering into a constantly enlarging and richer experience. He requires some contributing agency to direct him and to provide for mutual associations of general helpfulness. The American Lyceum was designed to supplement each man's lack, so that by a proper cooperation of the several leaders of thought in a community there might be a mutual exchange of attainments, and a dissemination to those who seemed to lack most the fruit of knowledge. Mr. Holbrook, the founder of the lyceum movement, assumed that there were many men interested in the advancement of intellectual and moral values, but knew that no provision was made for them to exchange ideas and promote those designed to serve mankind most effectively.

The formation of a local lyceum was a very simple matter. One enthusiast suggested that where the members of a family met for the discussion of some worthy topic, there was a lyceum; or when two people met to discuss somewhat formally some topic for the general good, there was a lyceum. The institution we are discussing was not quite so simple. As a first step in the organization, a few influential individuals would take it upon themselves to call a public meeting,



to which all classes should be invited. At this meeting a plain, familiar address would be given by some one selected for the occasion, to present the nature, use, and advantages of the lyceum, its effect upon schools, the manufacturing and mechanic arts, as well as their salutary and more general effect upon the moral and intellectual welfare of the community at large. At the close of the meeting both men and women would be invited to unite in the formation of a lyceum. A committee would be chosen to prepare a constitution and to take any other steps necessary to get the society well on its way. Another meeting would be appointed for the adoption of the constitution and to complete the organization.<sup>1</sup>

In the article in which Mr. Holbrook suggested the organization of associations for mutual and practical education he indicated what he considered to be a proper list of officers together with their duties. "The officers of each branch of the society shall be a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries, five Curators, and three Delegates, to meet delegates from other branches of the society in the same county. The President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Recording Secretary shall perform the duties usually implied in those offices. The Corresponding Secretaries shall make communications to each other for the benefit of the society, as discoveries, improvements, or other circumstances shall require. The Curators shall have charge of the library, apparatus, cabinet, and all other property of the society not appertaining to the treasury. The delegates of the several branches of the society in any one county shall meet semi-annually, at such place as they shall choose, for the purpose of consulting upon measures for promoting the designs of the society, particularly for encouraging an institution for giving an economical and practical education, and for qualifying teachers."<sup>2</sup>

1. Annals of Education, Vol. 1, p. 128.

2. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 1, p. 594.





Incidentally, the above quotation suggests some of the lines of activity followed by the local lyceums. The people of the community were to bring together in their society books, apparatus to illustrate some of the simple laws of physics, chemistry and other sciences, and specimens of minerals and other articles of natural or artificial production. These were to be kept in the meeting place for the use of all the members and for all the people of the community. In their meetings attempts would be made to create a desire to use the books and study the contents of the cabinets. Again, Mr. Holbrook suggests the objects to be attained and the most desirable procedure to attain them. "The first object of this society is to procure for youths an economical and practical education, and to diffuse rational and useful information through the community generally. The second object is to apply the sciences and the various branches of education to the domestic and useful arts, and to all the common purposes of life..... The society will hold meetings as often as they think it expedient for the purpose of mutual instruction in the sciences, by investigating and discussing them or any other branch of useful knowledge. The several branches of natural philosophy, viz.: Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Pneumatics, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Botany, any branch of the Mathematics, History, Political Economy, or any political, intellectual, or moral subject, may be examined and discussed by the society. Any branch of the society may, as often as they think it expedient, procure regular courses of instruction by lectures or otherwise, in any subject of useful knowledge. Any person may become a member of the society by paying to the treasurer annually, one dollar; and ten dollars paid any any one time will constitute a person a member for life. The money paid to the society for membership or otherwise shall be appropriated to the purchase of books, apparatus, a cabinet, aiding an institution for practical education, or for some other object for the benefit of the society."<sup>1</sup>

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 1, p.594.





In the early days of the movement the meetings were usually held weekly or bi-weekly, and were rather informal in procedure. The proper officers would arrange for the program which was varied to meet the peculiar requirements of the place and people. Some gave their attention largely to science, and discussed the subject somewhat informally but according to a rather definite program. Others used the more formal lecture method of presenting the subjects for consideration. In some cases the society would vary from the subjects of a scientific and definite character to those of a more general or miscellaneous nature, involving principles of expediency in the fields of government, law, political and domestic economy, agriculture, education, morals, etc. These subjects would be discussed in the form of debate or by formal address followed by general discussion. Exercises for young and inexperienced members such as readings, declamations, composition, particularly letter writing, also grammar and geography, were introduced. Each county, town, and state lyceum conducted its meetings and managed its affairs as local conditions directed. In the earliest days the leaders of the meetings and those who participated in them were drawn from the immediate community. The societies were self-sufficient in the matter of programs. Later, some person of superior ability as a speaker or demonstrator, and with knowledge somewhat above the average, would be invited to speak before neighboring lyceums. He would receive no compensation, in addition to his expenses, for his services. Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered many lyceum lectures in his early days for such a consideration. In one instance he reported to a committee that he would be pleased to give an address for the expenses of the trip, but would have to insist that he have three quarts of oats for his horse. Still later there developed a group of men who gave considerable time to public lecturing before lyceums and other similar societies, - Mr. Emerson was the leader of this group not only in point of time, but also in the quality and



character of his messages, - and with their coming came also the lecture fee, very small at first - only \$5.00 or \$10.00 for a lecture - and the more formal but less frequent meetings of the lyceum.

Provision was made in most of the lyceums for meetings of different groups at different times. School teachers, because of their common tasks and interests, would have a special time to meet to discuss their problems. Likewise the farmers, the mechanics, women, and still other groups would meet, apart from those whose special interest was different, to consider their own activities. These group meetings did not supplant the general meetings, but were designed rather to be supplementary.

In many instances lyceums were organized for and by a group whose interests were alike. The programs in such cases were, of course, directed to secure certain results for the group involved. The character and extent of the library, cabinet, apparatus, etc., would be determined by the special activities of the members. In 1835, in Philadelphia, was organized a Teachers' Lyceum. It was sufficiently commanding to call a meeting for the formation of a state lyceum, and this state lyceum was sufficiently important to attract the attention of the national organization and secure an amendment to the national constitution so that the seventh annual meeting could be held in Philadelphia. In this connection mention might be made of the fact that the Germans in Pennsylvania who were generally opposed to the public school idea favored the local, self-supported, democratic lyceum.

The junior preachers of the New England Methodist Conference formed a society for the pursuit of knowledge which was called the Clerical Lyceum. Their work in their society was much like that of the general lyceums except that more attention was given to courses of reading. These courses were general and not limited to theological subjects.





Late in 1833 the United States Naval Lyceum was organized. It proposed to collect from all parts of the world objects of natural history, to give some attention to discovery, and reports on findings and explorations on new or little known islands and coasts. Instruction was given in navigation and in the use of sea-faring instruments. It was proposed to publish a magazine to present items of interest to men in the navy. Collections in natural history were deposited in the navy buildings in New York City. The reports of this lyceum to the national meetings were unusually interesting and contained much helpful information.

In 1842 Mr. Holbrook went to New York and opened rooms in the building of the trustees of the Public School Society to conduct an Exchange Lyceum. He was acting as the central agent of his plan of school exchanges by which he proposed to induce students in different schools to exchange drawings, minerals, and other work and collections that would be mutually helpful.

Abraham Lincoln addressed a Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield, Illinois, in 1838. A report was made to one of the National meetings from a Juvenile Lyceum in New York City.

The Literary and Philosophical Society of South Carolina appointed Messrs. T.S.Grimke, H.R.Frost and Wm. P. Finley to prepare an address on the "Lyceum". Mr. Grimke probably prepared the address. After referring to the earlier use of the word "lyceum", the address recommended a division of the organization into two classes, the elementary and the representative. Among the elementary lyceums are described the family, the social or neighborhood, the village and parish lyceums; the representative lyceums are the district, state, and national organizations. A further description presents the family lyceum as a simple arrangement by which the members of a family designate certain evenings or a certain evening of each week for helpful and enlightening conversation,



and this is to be according to some program previously agreed upon. The social or neighborhood lyceum is composed of many persons in a social group or in a neighborhood. The term social would be used to designate a group in a city where other factors than proximity determine relations. In sparsely settled communities the neighborhood would be the unit. By such an arrangement visiting would be made more significant and would have some point to it. There might be class lyceums composed of those who are interested in the study of some particular book, books, or branch of knowledge. The representative lyceums recommended in the address were like the county, state, and national lyceum outlined by Mr. Holbrook. The address closes with some observations worthy of a place in this statement.

"The lyceum system interferes with no other scheme of improvement, and is, on the contrary, auxiliary to them all.

"It is in harmony with the spirit of the age, and by combining various modes of action, will give it new strength and animation.

"It will counteract the spirit of jealousy which prevails too extensively among individuals of particular classes and professions.

"It is essentially a plan of self-instruction and of mutual instruction.

"It furnishes a convenient and simple method of preserving knowledge acquired in early life, and of diffusing and maintaining a taste for reading and intellectual improvement.

"It will thus enable all the members of society to act with more effect in promoting the cause of education, and the progress of literature.

"The last benefit which the address mentions is that the system is peculiarly a republican institution, - the people's system - and admirably fitted to confer precisely that degree and that kind of knowledge which is so valuable





to the people of this country, which, without making them profound scholars, will enlarge their minds so that they can comprehend the value of learning, and enable them to discover, in some measure, their own ignorance, - which will inspire the love of improvement, and while it shows them their own defects, directs and assists them in providing a remedy, and in surmounting the obstacles which lie in their way."<sup>1</sup>

Certain features of the lyceum membership, libraries, apparatus, etc., are reported in a statement relative to the Middlesex County, Massachusetts Lyceum. There were twenty-three town lyceums in Middlesex County, and the number of members in each society varied from one hundred to three hundred with over six hundred members in the Newton Lyceum. The Waltham Lyceum had a library of eight hundred volumes, and apparatus worth \$1000.00; in Newton there was a library of five hundred volumes, and in Ashby there was a collection of three or four hundred mineral specimens and a collection of plants and insects. It is remarked that two of the societies had instrumental music on their programs.

Unusually extravagant language was used to indicate the wholesome influence of the lyceums on society. "There is no way of accomplishing so much good for a trifling expense." "It has brought together the broken and disjointed members of society." "Its influence on the members has been powerful in uniting opposing parties." "Many who have been in the habit heretofore of going to the theaters now say that they prefer going to the lyceums." The foregoing are a few sentences taken at random from the report of the Middlesex County Lyceum. Very similar statements are found in practically all of the reports concerning the operation and influence of the organizations.

Perhaps the best way to understand the nature of a lyceum meeting and its contribution to a community is to read what a visitor had to say about his

---

1. Annals of Education, Vol.5, pp.193, 198.





reactions to a lyceum program. At a meeting in 1830 at Topsfield, Massachusetts, to organize a lyceum several gentlemen made addresses. Among them was Judge Cummins who is reported as relating his experiences in visiting several lyceums. The quotation following will give an idea of the subjects discussed, the attendance, interest, and general effect. "In Worcester he was invited to attend one of these lyceums. He found the place of meeting well filled with interested and attentive listeners. They were the mechanics and traders, and the laboring classes generally. There were the most intelligent gentlemen in the place and the most respectable families. And what, after all, perhaps, was the best of it, and what ought not by any means to be omitted or forgotten, was that those families not only went there themselves but they carried their domestics with them. He had previously visited the lyceum in Concord; it was the same there. All classes were present; all classes were interested; and he believed all classes were receiving instruction. He afterwards visited Hampshire, where he was very generally acquainted, and attended a Lyceum at Northampton. The same spectacle presented itself there. A learned and able gentleman was imparting to a throng of listeners knowledge, which until these days had been considered the special property of a profession.

"In these three large societies he had the pleasure of hearing three professional men explaining the mysteries of their peculiar crafts to the uninitiated. In one of them a physician explained the circulation of the blood to people whose blood had been circulating all their lives without their knowing how. For his own part, he never knew how his blood circulated before. He had heard about it, it was true, but he never understood it before. The lecturer explained to him how the heart performed its functions and how the blood was forced through the various channels, and he came away astonished and delighted to find that all this curious and wonderful mechanism could be so exhibited as



that even he should understand its construction. At another place he heard a Theologian inculcating the theory of morality. It was plain and practical. He enforced different duties by showing they could be derived from the plain great principles; he showed us how we ought to act, and why we ought to act; he made the path plain before us, and truths divine fell mended from his tongue. At the third, the labyrinths of the law were explored. This science he had been all his life-time exploring but now on a sudden it was made so plain that he could understand it, and he was almost afraid everybody else would understand it. His brother Ashmun had made it so simple and easy that it was almost to be feared that all the people of Northampton would become lawyers, and then they would have no need of any lawyers at all. He seemed indeed to be possessed with the spirit of the place, and had let himself completely down to the comprehension of the public. For his own part, he was astonished that so unintelligible a subject had been made so perfectly intelligible. And this, he said, would be one advantage of these institutions."<sup>1</sup>

As we have already observed, Mr. Holbrook's plan was to relate the local society to the national organization through the county and state associations. In this complete organization provision was made for the larger aspects of education, and some things were planned then that have never been fully accomplished. The following additional statement taken from his initial article on the matter presents his plan of complete organization.

"The board of delegates in each county shall appoint such officers as shall be necessary for their organization or for doing any business coming within their province. Each board of delegates shall appoint a representative to meet representatives from other boards who shall be styled the Board of Mutual Education for a given state; and it might be advantageous to have also a General

---

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.5, p.141.





Board embracing the United States. It shall be the duty of the general or state boards to meet annually to appoint a president and other officers, to devise and recommend such a system of education as they shall think most eligible, also to recommend such books as they shall think best fitted to answer the purposes for which they are designed, and to adopt and recommend such measures generally as are most likely to secure to the rising generation the best intellectual, moral, and physical education, and to diffuse the greatest quantity of useful information among the various classes of the community."<sup>1</sup> In addition to the above the state boards were to form the connecting link between the local and county societies and the national organization. In practice that particular item miscarried. Local, county, and state lyceums were represented in the annual meetings, and the leaders seemed pleased to have any one in attendance who represented in any way any kind of a lyceum or kindred society.

Mr. Holbrook planned even more widely than the borders of the United States. He proposed an Universal Lyceum with Chancellor Brougham of England as president, and with fifty-two vice presidents representing different countries and different interests.<sup>2</sup> This was never accomplished.

In 1837 Mr. Holbrook began the Lyceum Village of Berea, twelve miles from Cleveland, Ohio. Five hundred acres of land was vested in an incorporated board of trustees. Houses, shops, and a school house were erected, and a flourishing settlement was soon established. This was to be the first of a series of such villages including persons interested in the lyceum enterprise. Another was started at Westchester, near New York. The Berea enterprise came to a disastrous close in a few years and left Mr. Holbrook heavily in debt.<sup>3</sup>

Under the heading "Nature of the Lyceum" is the following rather comprehensive statement of the fundamental aspects of the organization, indicating

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.1, p.594.

2. Annals of Education, Vol.7, p.183.

3. Barnard's Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.8, p.230.



its character:

"It is a voluntary institution. It resorts to no law, but the law of motives, and the freedom of choice. It invites, but never urges. It asks for effort, but wishes for none but voluntary and cheerful effort. It believes that the dignity, success, and hopes of the whole system, are founded in the simple fact, that the human intellect is a self-moving, self-acting, and self-controlling principle, - capable, under the aid and guidance of its Creator, of achieving its own advancement and elevation..... It proposes the organization of a Branch Lyceum in every town in our Union but requires it in no one.

It is a social institution. It recognizes that our social intercourse has a very great bearing upon our personal life, and, accordingly, seeks to provide an atmosphere designed to make social intercourse both pleasant and profitable. Most of the public meetings are informal and the participation of all is invited. The easy, conversational way of instruction may be carried on to family or other smaller social groups.

It is a self-adapting institution. Any community, and any class of the community, can form a lyceum, not only to suit their wishes, but to advance their own purposes and pursuits. A farming community can associate, not only as intellectual, moral and social beings, but as farmers. Small groups may become departments of a general society.

It is a republican institution. Its foundation is moral freedom and independence, without which no one can be truly free. It permits, invites, and enables all who unite in its operations to think, judge, and act for themselves. It would liberate them from the slavery of a party, of a demagogue, and of their passions..... It aims at universal education by inducing and enabling all whom it embraces to educate themselves.

It is a benevolent institution. It is mutual, or gives, hoping to





receive. It also gives, not hoping to receive..... It maintains that teachers are bound, not only to instruct their pupils, but to do good to each other, and to make the improvements in the science and art of teaching, public property."<sup>1</sup>

An attempt has been made to present the nature and objectives of the American Lyceum. It was a simple organization of the people of a community. There was just enough of the official and formal aspects to give it a proper dignity and entity, but it was designed to be a free, open society for all the people and for the discussion of all worthy community problems. Its chief interest was education. The programs of the society meetings were for the diffusion of practical and cultural information among the immediate members, and, through them, into the entire community. This instruction was largely mutual, each member participating to the extent of his ability or inclination in the several programs. But indirectly the lyceums carried on a constant propaganda for the improvement of the common schools. Teachers were urged to become members of the local societies, and every opportunity was given to them to advance themselves in the efficiency of their work. The libraries, cabinets, and apparatus were available for teachers in their school work. The lyceum was for the people and was established and maintained by the people. It occupied a prominent place in the movement for better organized and more comprehensive intellectual, moral and cultural advantages.

1. Annals of Education, Vol.2, p.35





## Chapter IV

### The American Lyceum and Public Education.

It is evident from the foregoing chapters that the American Lyceum was an educational agency of considerable importance in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. No attempt was made in chapters II and III to emphasize the educational features of the movement, but, simply, to present the historical development and the character of the organization. However, no story of the institution can be told without apparent special interest in its many references to education. It was a movement of the people and at a time when readjustments were necessary. New sections of the country were being settled and the older states were in the process of change by the influx of foreigners, and the development of manufacturing interests. Measures were necessary to secure to these changing conditions some stabilizing agent, and education of the children and a continuation of that education into the years of adulthood seemed to be the most effective means available. But education was in a sorry condition so far as the principal agency, the public school, was concerned. Accordingly, the people, upon whom all responsibility rests in the last analysis, recognizing the limitations of the schools and the urgent need of the product of a better school system, engaged themselves in the promotion of greater interest by the organization of numerous and varied societies to accomplish the desired end. Foremost among these was the American Lyceum.

Henry Barnard refers to the many societies, and places his estimate upon the achievements of the lyceum in his introductory statement to a discussion of the institution. "Of all these, whether under the names of school systems



(Infant, Free, Monitorial, Manual Labor, Agricultural, etc.,) or of Mechanics' Institutions, Lyceums, Societies for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, Mercantile Associations, Teachers' Seminaries, Teachers' Associations, Literary Institutes, Societies of Education, School Agents' Societies, Library Associations, Book Clubs, Reading Associations, Educational Journals, etc., etc., none created so immediate and general interest, or excited for a time an influence so great or beneficent as The American Lyceum."<sup>1</sup> After Josiah Holbrook had outlined his plan for an association of adults for mutual instruction he stated the object of the society as follows: "The first object of this society is to procure for youths an economical and practical education, and to diffuse rational and useful information through the community generally. The second object is to apply the sciences and the various branches of education to the domestic and useful arts, and to all the common purposes of life."<sup>2</sup> In the above, Holbrook not only presented himself as a farsighted educational advocate, but also as an educational prophet. Subsequent efforts have been in the direction of a more intimate relation between education and the practical aspects of life.

Mr. Holbrook stated the objects of the lyceum in 1826, and thirteen years later, in Philadelphia, the closing meeting of the American Lyceum was a national educational convention. From its inception to its close there were repeated assurances that the movement was for the promotion of a better educational program. These assurances were expressed in many ways, chief of which was the constant discussion of educational topics in the meetings of all the societies. Teachers were given a large place in the consideration and the programs of the meetings. Attempts were made to make the way of learning easier for the youth by introducing more widely the use of simple apparatus for experimental and illustrative purposes, also by the establishment and resurrection of libraries in

1. Barnard's Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 14, p. 535, (1864).

2. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol. 1, p. 595, (1826).





or near the schools. Subsequent quotations with accompanying comment will indicate not only the efforts of the lyceum to improve the schools and the attitude of the people toward education, but also, and particularly, the reaction of the people to the activities of the societies.

A committee of the Middlesex County Lyceum was appointed to report on the best way to study the general subject, Improvement of our Common Schools. The report provided for a discussion of the topic "under three distinct propositions. 1. Whether any, and if any, what measures can be taken to provide for our common schools, teachers of greater talents and more practical knowledge of their profession, than are now generally employed. 2. Whether the method in which our schools are generally conducted, may not be improved by introducing a modification of the system adopted in schools of mutual instruction, and in infant schools. 3. What apparatus is it desirable should be introduced into our schools; and what series of books can be confidently recommended that would facilitate their improvement."<sup>1</sup> Teachers, method, and the tools of education are the three subjects of education for discussion in the above quotation. They were among the outstanding topics in 1831, and they are with us still, suggesting that in those days men were sufficiently conversant with educational requirements to give their time to fundamentals.

One characteristic of the announcements and reports of lyceum meetings was the presentation of a list of subjects for discussion. At a meeting in Boston in 1829, Rev. Asa Rand made remarks on the lyceum indicating the reasons why he favored the movement. First, it is economical, second, it agrees well with the modern principles of education in that it "cultivates and exercises the mind instead of filling, and crowding, and loading it." At this meeting a list of seventeen questions was proposed for discussion, ten of which dealt

---

1. Annals of Education, Vol.1,p.132.



directly with education and the public schools.<sup>1</sup> In 1834 the New Jersey Lyceum reported to the American Lyceum in its annual meeting, and the first sentence of the report was, "The New Jersey State Lyceum was organized at Princeton on the third and fourth of April, 1834, by the friends of education and of intellectual improvement." The report states further that the following subjects were discussed informally: "1. What is the state of common school instruction in your vicinity? 2. What attention does it receive from the community generally? 3. How may it be improved?" In the same report it was pointed out that "answers to the following questions were requested from every township." There were twenty-six questions in the list, all of which dealt with the public school situation.<sup>2</sup> The number of meetings might easily be multiplied many times in which all or a large number of the questions discussed were of a distinctly educational character.

It seems that this very general discussion of the subject of education bore fruitful results, and that the generous and benevolent spirit of the leaders was not without its reward. There were changes in the common schools, and in the attitude of the people toward them. In 1831 a rather elaborate statement is made relative to the practical value and results of the lyceum. We give here only the second item, "schools," although the report is largely a statement of educational accomplishments. "By means, entirely within the reach of any town in the United States, the character of a vast number of schools has been entirely changed, and that, too, without any additional expense of time or money. Numerous towns are now realizing at least double from their appropriations to schools, of what they received two years since. The same teachers and the same pupils do twice the work but very recently performed by them in consequence of the encouragement, animation, and aid received by them from lyceums. These in-

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.3, p.746, (1828).

2. Annals of Education, Vol.4, p.314.





stitutions virtually constitute a seminary for teachers, already enjoyed by thousands, and capable of being so extended as to embrace every teacher in our Union, and under such circumstances as to improve him immediately, constantly, and without expense."<sup>1</sup>

In a report of the sixth annual meeting of the American Lyceum in New York City one paragraph contained the following: "We cannot help expressing the gratification we feel in finding the attention of the lyceum, at its late session, turned almost exclusively to common schools. These, one would think, are beginning to be regarded as they should be - as the hope of our country and of its free institutions."<sup>2</sup> Lest the unwarranted conclusion might be reached that the foregoing statements were made by some biased enthusiastic advocate of the system, it seems desirable to interject a few statements made late in the century. Herbert B. Adams, after indicating the several objectives the lyceum sought to accomplish, continued: "Most of these objects were earnestly promoted and are worthy of historic record as characteristic features of the first great movement for popular educational extension in these United States..... Vigorous efforts were made to introduce history, the subject of political institutions, and natural science into the public schools. Lyceum extension was far more general and popular than the later 'university extension,' because, like mechanics' institutes, it was a more democratic and spontaneous movement." In the same article are the following observations: "Local libraries, fallen into disuse, were revived and came into demand. New libraries were created and used extensively. Traveling libraries were advocated and provided for in 1831 by the American Lyceum. Historic types of local lyceums deserve investigation, for they represented the first great wave of educational democracy or adult popular education. Free public libraries followed lyceums."<sup>3</sup>

1. Annals of Education, Vol.1,p.526.

2. Annals of Education, Vol.6, p.281.

3. Report, Commissioner of Education, 1899-1900, Vol.1,pp.275 ff.





In a like manner E. G. Dexter points out the different measures endorsed and advocated by the lyceum, and continues: "A mere glance at this list is enough to show that we have in this movement the forerunner and parent of many of our most valuable institutions today. The United States Weather Bureau, library extension, the museum of natural history, the scientific laboratory, free text-books, the village improvement society, all are there fore-shadowed; and there can be little doubt that the National Education Association, and American Association for the Advancement of Science were both more or less directly the outgrowth of the lyceum movement." As a kind of summary statement, Dexter says that "The American Lyceum was a popular institution of immense educational influence."<sup>1</sup> The claims made by Dexter may seem to be somewhat extravagant, but when the varied and persistent programs of the lyceum movement are considered, there are many reasons for concluding that the many societies in their separate as well as their general meetings contributed largely to the inauguration of new movements and the acceleration or modification for better results of some already launched.

It is interesting, in this connection, to note the relation of the lyceum to an outstanding and worthy educational agency that had a continuous history for seventy-eight years beginning in 1830, The American Institute of Instruction. Hinsdale speaks of the organization of the Institute of Instruction as a development of the growing interest in education and schools, "and appears to have had some special relation to the lyceum movement which was then active in New England."<sup>2</sup> This rather cautious statement is warranted if one has not gone carefully into the activities of the lyceum at that period. The first meeting that led to the formation of the American Institute of Instruction convened on March 15, 1830, in Boston. "Pursuant to public notice, more than

1. Dexter, History of Education in the U.S., p.569.

2. Hinsdale, Horace Mann and the Common School Revival in the U.S., p.66.



two hundred instructors met in Boston on the fifteenth of March. Among them were several who hold a high rank in the literature of the century. A committee was appointed on each of the following subjects, viz.:

1. The Infant School System.
2. Monitorial Schools.
3. Means of Raising the Qualifications of Teachers.
4. Branches of Instruction Appropriate to Common Schools.
5. Associations of Teachers as Departments of Lyceums<sup>1</sup>

The call for the meeting referred to in the above quotation was issued in the name of the State Committee of Lyceums, and the objects as set forth in an editorial notice widely copied in the New England papers was "to receive reports on the progress of lyceums, and the condition of common schools, and to acquire information as to the organization of infant schools, and the use of school and cheap scientific apparatus."<sup>2</sup> However intimate the relation between the lyceum movement and the beginning of the American Institute of Instruction, it must not be forgotten that the soil was particularly rich for such an organization at that time. But the lyceum movement had been giving the soil that particular kind of fertility. It is not surprising that other and more highly specialized organizations were born and began a long and worthy existence, and it is the highest praise to the popular movement, the lyceum, that there resulted from its activities definite movements among legislators and professional men to lay well and deeply the necessary foundation stones for a permanent and commanding superstructure. When Holbrook was drowned near Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1854, the American Institute of Instruction passed the following resolution: "That our whole community owes a debt of lasting gratitude to the de-

1. Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.5, p.235, (1830).

2. Barnard's Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.2, p.19, (1856).





ceased, as having been the father of the system of the lyceums, by which a taste for science has been excited, and the young of our cities and villages have been allured from frivolous if not hurtful pleasure, and instructed in subjects which enlarge, elevate, and improve the mind and heart."<sup>1</sup>

It is the purpose of this study to call attention to the very decided and extensive movement for educational reform as represented by the lyceum organizations, and to correct the impression that prevails rather generally that Horace Mann and Henry Barnard were the creators of a new interest in education. Such wrong impressions result from statements like the following: "Under the leadership of Horace Mann and Henry Barnard, and largely through their personal efforts, a reaction set in. Associations to foster education were everywhere formed; journals for the discussion of educational questions were formed in great numbers."<sup>2</sup> Graves represents the situation more accurately when he says, "For a score of years before Mann appeared, definite preparation for the movement had been in progress, and the labors of the individuals and associations engaged in these endeavors should be briefly noted." And again, "In this awakening the most conspicuous figure is probably Horace Mann, but there were several leaders in the field before him, many were contemporaneous, and the work was expanded and deepened by others of distinction long after he withdrew from the scene."<sup>3</sup> Before Mann and Barnard were Carter, Brooks, and many other advocates of better things educationally. The Massachusetts State Board of Education was created before Mann was ever thought of as an educational leader, and the Massachusetts Board did not come out of a clear sky,- it did not happen;- it was a logical and inevitable result of agitation and propaganda. And the propaganda had been conducted during a period of eleven years in a hundred and more places in the state

1. Barnard's Amer. Journal of Education, Vol.8,p.230.

2. Bunker, F.F., Reorganization of the Public School System, Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1916, No.8.

3. Graves, F.P., A History of Education in Modern Times, p.167.



through the lyceum organizations.

No attempt is made here to discredit Mann and Barnard, but rather to place them. They came in on a rising tide, and were peculiarly fitted to carry the movement on to a relatively successful completion. Mann had a sane knowledge of men, and a consuming human interest. When his mighty powers were released to the cause of education, the time and the man seemed to meet most happily. Seminaries for teachers had been advocated by the lyceum from its beginning, and the lyceums, in many instances, constituted practical seminaries. The idea of a school for teachers was by no means new when Mann advocated it soon after he became secretary, but he was so sufficient as a leader and as a spokesman for the rather general but poorly spoken wish of the people that he was able to establish "the first normal school." It was indeed fortunate for the lyceum that men like Mann and Barnard appeared when they did. The time of agitation was passing, and the day for conserving results was at hand. The two leaders in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island were fortunately at hand to conserve the results of a decade or more of persistent seed sowing.

Perhaps the last word on the subject of the lyceums should be spoken by the men we have referred to in the preceding paragraphs, Mann and Barnard, for the reason that they, more than any others during the period of their educational careers, were able to interpret and evaluate correctly. In their Common School Journals references were made to the societies and favorable comment was made upon them. Barnard remarks: "We have again and again called the attention of the friends of education to the powerful instrumentality which lyceums and similar institutions can become in the great work of promoting intelligence in society. We have almost invariably found that those who were establishing and maintaining them were ready to promote the advancement of common school education, which they felt to be at the foundation of permanent and enlarged





success in their several enterprises. We are glad to find that in most of the modified forms of the lyceum system, and that during the coming winter more or less extended courses of popular lectures will be delivered." <sup>1</sup> And, again, "The increase of active and well conducted lyceums in this state, and at this season, is much to be desired, as one of the most direct and effectual means of directing the attention of the people to the importance of improving the schools.. . . . In looking over the courses of lectures to be delivered in several of our larger cities, it is a cheering symptom of an awakening interest in popular education, to see that some of the most eminent minds in the country are at this time maturing and uttering their opinions on some of the varied topics bound up in this mighty subject." <sup>2</sup> Barnard refers further to the lyceums as agencies for continuing the work of the public schools. He says, "they should take up the education of the community where the schools leave it, and by every help and means of self-culture, carry it forward to the end of life." <sup>3</sup>

Horace Mann, in his third annual report to the Massachusetts State Board of Education gives several paragraphs to a discussion of the lyceum and similar institutions. One can hardly escape the conclusion that Mann thought and wrote about the lyceum at a time when it was declining as an aggressive factor in education. The more formal lecture course had supplanted the earlier, self-sufficient village discussion group, and with the change had come a clearly defined adult and more general interest. He observes, "A class of institutions has lately sprung up in this state, universally known by the name of lyceums or mechanics' institutes, before some of which courses of popular lectures on literary or scientific subjects are annually delivered, while others possess libraries and reading rooms; and, in a very few cases, both these objects are combined. These

1. Conn. Common School Journal, Vol.2, p.81.
2. " " " " Vol.1, p.39.
3. " " " " Vol.4, p.25





institutions have the same general purpose in view as public libraries, viz., that of diffusing instructive and entertaining knowledge, and of exciting a curiosity to acquire it; though they are greatly inferior to libraries, in point of efficiency..... An inventory of the means of general intelligence which did not include these institutions would justly be regarded as incomplete."<sup>1</sup>

A detailed statement of these voluntary agencies and their efforts in the field of popular education is given as a part of the third report. It is included in this study to show the distribution of the lyceums in Massachusetts. No doubt similar statements could have been made for other states. Incidentally, some suggestion is made as to the number of people reached by the lyceum. And this report covers the year ending July 1, 1839, a time, as indicated above, when the extreme popular features of the organization had yielded to the more formal lecture course. The county is the unit in making the report on this particular item:

#### Essex County

Number of Mechanios' Institutes	3
Number of Members	540
Number of Lyceums, etc.	12
Average number of Attendants	4385
Expenses for lectures, including incidentals	\$2,751

#### Middlesex County

Number of Mechanics' Institutes	2
Number of Members	675
Number of Lyceums, etc.	24
Average Number of Attendants	5080
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals	\$3,004

1. Common School Journal, Vol.2,p.122.



## Worcester County

Number of Mechanics' Institutes	1
Number of Members	64
Number of Lyceums, etc.	18
Average Number of Attendants	3005
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals	\$539

## Hampshire County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	3
Average Number of Attendants	635
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals	\$75

## Hampden County

Number of Mechanics' Institutes	1
Number of Members	60
Number of Lyceums, etc.	4
Average Number of Attendants	300
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals,	\$100

## Franklin County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	5
Average Number of Attendants	450
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals,	\$32

## Berkshire County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	10
Average number of Attendants	1065
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals,	\$136

## Norfolk County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	13
Average Number of Attendants	1355
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals,	\$1,146





## Bristol County

Number of Mechanics' Institutes	1
Number of Members	100
Number of Lyceums, etc.	6
Average Number of Attendants	1060
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals, \$1,455	

## Plymouth County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	7
Average Number of Attendants	805
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals, \$327	

## Barnstable County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	5
Average Number of Attendants	570
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals \$73	

## Dukes County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	3
Average Number of Attendants	140
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals, \$25	

## Nantucket County

Number of Lyceums, etc.	1
Average Number of Attendants	400
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals, \$100	

## Summary for the state

Number of Mechanics' Institutes	8
Number of Members	1439
Number of Lyceums, etc.,	137
Average Number of Attendants	32698
Expenses for Lectures, including incidentals, \$21197 <sup>1</sup>	



The report observes that, in addition to the above, there are many societies in the state, using different names, aiming at self-improvement by debating, declamation, reading, composition, and lectures at irregular intervals. The author of the report not only mentions the variety of societies, but refers also to the diversity of benefits conferred by the several organizations. He remarks that, "It has been often repeated, by numerous and accurate observers, that, in the city of Boston, the general topics of conversation, and the mode of treating them, have been decidedly improved since what may be called the reign of popular lectures."<sup>1</sup> Mann's very great interest in establishing more permanently and extending more widely the free public school as an institution of the state probably accounts in part for his failure to make reference to the lyceum as an agency for the promotion of common schools. Then, as suggested above, the lyceum itself was undergoing a change. It had wrought well in doing its part to secure a state board of education and a secretary, and now it was free to enter a new field. In Appendix I the new field will be discussed.

---

1. Common School Journal, Vol.2, p.137.



### Summary and Conclusions.

In chapters II, III, IV, a somewhat extended statement has been made relative to the history and organization of the American Lyceum. Beginning in 1826, in Massachusetts, the movement spread rapidly and widely during little more than a decade. It was a movement of the people for popular and mutual education, with a persistent and comprehensive interest in public or common school education. The meetings of the society were frequent, either weekly or bi-weekly, during the larger part of the year, and the subject discussed most frequently was some phase of the common school problem. The national meetings were, in fact, educational conventions, although it was only the last one that was called by that name.

As indicated in Chapter I, during the earlier years of the century and on into the second quarter, there were almost no effective school laws, and very little effective school practice. Responsible supervision was lacking, and there was no uniformity in supervision, teaching, or in the tools and equipment for school work. Districts were self-sufficient and independent in matters of money, school program, and in every other school interest. Into this untoward condition the American Lyceum was injected, demanding reform in every fundamental feature of the educational spirit and machinery. The lyceum was an agitator with the loud but inarticulate voice of the agitator part of the time, but with the clarion voice of the prophet sounding in every city, town, and hamlet most of the time. The demands of the lyceum were heard finally,





and, supplemented and enforced by other similar agencies, called into being the American Institute of Instruction, the Massachusetts, and other, State Boards of Education, Normal Schools, and other long- and much-needed school machinery. State leaders of educational forces were selected and set to a worthy task. Additional periodical literature was printed and generously distributed. Education won new and able friends, and the Common School Revival was on. The lyceum did not accomplish it all, but an organization that touched regularly and intimately hundreds of thousands of people with a constant and consistent discussion of the subject of education certainly had some part in securing a more substantial interest in and a more sympathetic attitude toward public education.



## Appendix I

### The Modern Lyceum and Chautauqua.

According to a statement in *The Dial*, the history of popular lecturing in this country would seem to fall into three periods: "the first, roughly bounded, ends with the civil war; the second, some twelve years ago; while the third is still with us."<sup>1</sup> Apparently, the later lecture period of the lyceum is taken as the beginning of this long period of popular lecturing. The local lyceum, as presented in the preceding chapters, became an organization to secure lecturers for the villages and cities, and the annual lecture course became an established feature of American intellectual and cultural life. Emerson, the first professional lecturer, spoke ninety-eight times before the Concord lyceum, and in Salem every year for twenty years. He said "My pulpit is the lyceum platform."

When James Redpath and George I. Fall established the Boston Lyceum Bureau in 1868, a practical recognition was given to the change that had taken place in the management of organizations for practical and popular improvement. Before that time each local society or committee went into the open lecture and entertainment market and selected the speakers for their formal, public programs. With the advent of the lyceum bureau, the market was centralized and committees would go, not to the lecturer himself, but to his manager, the bureau. This simplified the procedure by putting it on a business basis, and it also proved to be an economical arrangement in time and money. The publicists, reformers,

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark Lee Luther, *The Dial*, Vol. 25, p. 291, 1898.





and leaders in every field of thought toured the country under the direction of the lyceum bureaus to speak in the towns where they had been "sold." They were the magazines and propagandists of their day. The leaders in many of the great social movements of the nineteenth century were prominent on the lecture platform. John B. Gough, leader in temperance agitation, lectured many times on "The Power of Example," "Social Responsibilities," "Social Drinking Customs," and "The Duty of the Intemperate." Wendell Phillips, following his great campaign against slavery, during which he refused any compensation, next took up the labor problems. Mary A. Livermore also lectured on the labor question, and was a pioneer in the movement for woman's suffrage. Anna Eliza Young, nineteenth wife of Brigham Young, lectured against Mormonism in the seventies. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Susan B. Anthony lectured widely on woman's rights. A few of the other earlier and more prominent lecturers on the lyceum platform were: Oliver Wendell Holmes, James Russell Lowell, Louis Agassiz, Horace Greeley, Charles Sumner, Charles Francis Adams, Daniel Webster, Horace Mann, Edward Everett Hale, and Henry Ward Beecher. These are simply the outstanding representatives of a large group of men and women who sought by means of the public platform to improve the general condition of the human family. They were sincere and delivered a worthy message. Beecher probably announced their creed when he said, "I believe in giving people what they ought to have as long as they will stand for it, then I give them what they want." The New York Graphic, in 1877, sized up the lyceum movement of that time as being composed of "poets, generals, politicians, travelers, hunters, novelists, heroes, exiles, and martyrs."

With the coming of the central or bureau management came also a variety of "numbers" on the course, and, in many instances, a lower standard of "talent." It does not follow that the central bureaus were responsible for the decline, although many of the minor ones were not careful and reliable in their



selections and recommendations; but the desire to please the people influenced the local committees and frequently the element of instruction was sacrificed for entertainment. The extent to which this cheapening process went is suggested in *The Nation*, 1869. "We would advise, (committees) in making arrangements next year, to restrict their invitations to specialists of established reputation, men who either have completely mastered some subject and speak on it with generally recognized authority, or men who are gifted with great powers of statement and apply them successfully to a particular class of subjects; and to eschew the simple rhetorician who is ready to treat any theme at a hundred dollars an hour. The body to which he belongs is one which is growing prodigiously, and its influence, whether exerted through the platform, the magazine, or the wholesome and independent family paper, is producing the worst effects on the tender and susceptible minds of both Edward and Almira."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the great increase in lyceum or lecture bureaus and the almost innumerable lecture or "star" courses have each made some contribution to the decline in the character of the programs offered. The high standards set by the founders of the early bureaus have not always been maintained by the more local agencies. All bureaus could not have the great leaders of thought on their lists, and the leading platform men could visit only a few places in the course of a year. Accordingly, local bureaus would engage speakers and entertainers to supply the demand of a less discriminating public. *The World's Work* mentions as the principal bureaus: Redpath, Mutual, Coit, Alkahest, Central, Eastern, White, Midland, Davidson,- and about forty smaller agencies. The same article also points out that the "talent" have their union, the International Lyceum Association, which is made up of 762 members. These agencies and the union, perhaps with some non-union talent, supplied approximately twelve thousand village

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Nation*, Vol.8, p.271, 1869.





and small city lyceums in 1912. The lecturers, according to the author of the article, were divided into two classes: 1, the man who has accomplished something, and lectures incidentally to tell it, and, 2, the man or woman who can tell anything in a pleasing and forceful manner.<sup>1</sup> The period of decline was characterized as "a string of entertainments that have no earnest purpose, and minister to no manly and womanly want." In connection with the quotation just given is the suggestion that the high prices paid lecturers and entertainers brought an influx of mediocrity into the field which degraded the lyceum system. Colonel T.W. Higginson notes that "the scholar recedes from sight, and the impassioned orator takes his place." Also, music and operatic effects, together with vaudeville performances of doubtful merit, are offered to relieve the tedium of the lectures.

The advent of the magazine, exploiting every known cause and championing every known reform, had a tendency to supplant the spoken word of the platform lecturer. It was argued that the times were degenerate because the people would not listen to the serious lectures as in other days, but the premises do not warrant the conclusion. The people were not indifferent to the serious business of life, but were receiving their information and mental stimulus through other channels. The reformers spoke through the press and thus increased greatly their sphere of influence. The change that some thought indicated degeneracy was, in fact, a kind of evidence that the public demanded something even better than the spoken word,- the written word that could be preserved and reviewed.

As a part, and an increasingly popular part, of the modern lyceum and lecture movement is the Chautauqua. This was begun as a campmeeting at Chautauqua, New York, in 1871. In 1874 the character of the meetings was modified and it became a Sunday School Assembly. This was done through the efforts of John H., later Bishop, Vincent, and Lewis Miller, an Ohio manufacturer. In the beginning

---

1. French Strother, *World's Work*, Vol. 24, p. 551, 1912.





it was a movement of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1878, the Chautauqua Reading Circle was begun, and in 1885 nearly one hundred thousand were enrolled as students in this reading circle. Thus, the chautauqua, begun as a religious movement, has become a large part of the general lecture movement for moral, cultural, and intellectual ends. Like the later lyceum programs, there has been a tendency to froth in the chautauqua movement, but many attempts are made to eliminate this element for the worthier numbers and talent.

One of the latest statements relative to the extent of the Chautauqua and lyceum movement is to the effect that there are between ten and fifteen thousand lyceum courses and almost nine thousand Chautauquas in the United States; that approximately fifteen million people attended the lyceum numbers in one year, and that the total number in Chautauqua audiences in 1920 was about thirty-five million; that there were \$10,000,000 in receipts from lyceum courses, and \$20,000,000 from the Chautauquas in one year; that about thirty per cent of the "numbers" given were lectures, and that on the Chautauqua platform the aggregate number of lectures was 46,368 for 1920.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Paul M. Pearson, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, says of the Chautauqua: "Its program is patriotic but non-partisan, its teachings are always clearly moral but never sectarian. Without regard to class, creed, party or social stratification, its gospel is always of genuine uplift and broadening vision." Roosevelt remarked: "I know of nothing in the whole country which is so filled with blessing for the nation. There is probably no other educational influence in the country quite so fraught with hope as the Chautauqua and the movement of which it is the archetype."

---

1. W.R.Balch, Boston Transcript, Jan.29,1921.



Lecturers<sup>1</sup>

Adams, Charles Francis	Greeley, Horace
Adler, Dr. Felix	Hale, Edward Everett
Agassiz, Louis	Higginson, Col. T. W.
Alcott, A.B.	Holmes, O.W.
Anthony, Susan B.	Howe, Julia Ward
Arnold, Matthew	Ingersoll, Rob't G.
Banks, Gen.Nathaniel	James, Henry
Beecher, Henry Ward	Kennan, George
Blaine, James G.	King, Star
Billings, Josh.	Livermore, Mary A.
Burdette, Bob.	Lowell, James Russell
Butler, Ben.	McCabe, Chaplain
Cable, Geo.W.	McCarthy, Justin
Collyer, Robert	Nasby, Petroleum V.
Colfax, Schuyler	Nast, Thomas
Cook, Joseph	Nye, Bill
Curtis, Geo.Wm.	O'Reilley, John Boyle
Cushman, Charlotte	Parsons, Hon. Wm.
Dana, R.H.	Peary, Rob't E.
Dickenson, Anna	Phillips, Wendell
Douglass, Frederick	Pickering, Prof.
Eggleston, Edward	Potter, Helen
Emerson, Ralph Waldo	Riley, James Whitcomb
Garrison, Wm. Lloyd	Schurz, Carl
Gough, John B.	Stanley, Henry M.

1. The lecturers in this list belong almost wholly to the later lyceum and chautauqua period, beginning about 1840.





Stanton, Elizabeth Cady

Stoddard, John L.

Sumner, Charles

Talmadge, T. DeWitt

Taylor, Bayard

Thoreau, Henry D.

Tilton, Theo.

Trourgee, Albion W.

Trowbridge, T.J.

Twain, Mark

Wallace, Lew

Watterson, Henry

Whipple, E.P.

Young, Ann Eliza



## Appendix II

List of Lyceums <sup>1</sup>

American or National  
Ashby, Massachusetts  
Baltimore, Maryland  
Beriah Sacred Lyceum, New York City  
Boston, Massachusetts  
Boston Mechanics Lyceum  
Brooklyn, Connecticut  
Bucks County Pennsylvania  
Bucks County Teachers' Lyceum, Pennsylvania  
Buffalo, New York  
Cincinnati, Ohio  
Clerical Lyceum, New England Methodist Conference  
Concord, Massachusetts  
Connecticut State  
Darby, Connecticut  
Detroit, Michigan  
Dover, New Hampshire  
East Baltimore, Maryland  
Exchange Lyceum, New York City  
Gardiner, Maine  
Geneva, New York

---

1. The list includes only those considered in this study. Mr. Holbrook reported at Westchester, Pa., on August 18, 1835, that there were in the United States "A National Lyceum, fifteen or sixteen state lyceums, over one hundred county lyceums, and about three thousand village lyceums." Only the location of the lyceums is given, except in a few instances the character is indicated.



German Lyceums in following counties in Pennsylvania: Berks,  
Bucks, Cumberland, Lancaster, Montgomery.

Hartford, Connecticut

Illinois State

Jacksonville, Illinois

Jacksonville, Indiana

Juvenile Lyceum, New Brunswick

Juvenile Lyceum, New York City

Lyceum League of America. Organized under auspices of the  
Youths Companion

Lyceum of Teachers, Philadelphia

Lyceum Village of Berea, Ohio

Louisville, Kentucky

Massachusetts State

Marietta, Ohio

Middlesex County, Massachusetts

Millbury, Massachusetts

Montpelier, Vermont

Newark, New Jersey

Newarks Mechanic Association and Lyceum

New Bedford, Massachusetts

New Haven, Connecticut

New Jersey State

Newton, Massachusetts

New York State

North Adams, Massachusetts

Northern Lyceum of Philadelphia





Ontario County, New York

Pennsylvania State

Perth Amboy, New Jersey

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Plymouth, Massachusetts

Rochester, New York

Rutland County, Vermont

Salem, Massachusetts

St. Johnsbury, Vermont

Tennessee State

United States Naval

Utica, New York

Walpole, Massachusetts

Waltham, Massachusetts

Washington, D.C.

Williamstown, Massachusetts

Windham County, Connecticut

Worcester, Massachusetts

Worcester County, Massachusetts



Men who were prominent in the Lyceum Movement, 1826-1840.

Forty-four names in the list appear in Lippincott's Pronouncing Biographical Dictionary. Others are known to have been very prominent in education.

Alcott, Dr. A.B.  
 Ashmun, J.H.  
 Babcock, Rufus  
 Bailey, E.  
 Barnard, Henry  
 Bartlett, Dr. Josiah  
 Bigelow, J.P.  
 Bowdoin, J.  
 Bradley, Rev.  
 Brooks, Charles  
 Carter, J.G.  
 Channing, Dr. Wm. E.  
 Chapin, Rev. A.B.  
 Choate, Rufus  
 Cleveland, Nehemiah  
 Colburn, Warren  
 Davis, Seth  
 Day, Pres. Jeremiah  
 Dewey, Prof. Chester  
 Duer, Wm. A.  
 Dwight, Theodore  
 Emerson, G.B.  
 Emerson, R.W.  
 Everett, A.H.  
 Everett, Edward  
 Farrar, John  
 Fay, Warren  
 Felton, Cornelius C.  
 Field, Rev. Dr.  
 Finley, Wm. P.  
 Flint, Rev. Timothy  
 Foote, Caleb  
 Forrest, Wm.  
 Frelinghuysen, Theodore  
 Frost, H.R.  
 Gallaudet, Rev. T.H.  
 Green, Samuel  
 Grimke, Thos. S.  
 Griscom, John  
 Holbrook, Josiah  
 Howe, Samuel M.  
 Jackson, Wm.  
 Jenks, Wm.  
 Johnson, Gen.  
 Lincoln, Levi, Gov. Mass.  
 Lindsley, Philip  
 Lovering, W.

Lowell, Charles  
 Malcom, Howard  
 Mann, Horace  
 Merrill, J.C.  
 Neal, John  
 Olmstead, Prof. Denison  
 Peabody, Francis  
 Peers, Rev. B.O.  
 Phillips, Stephen C.  
 Pond, Enoch  
 Proudfit, Alexander  
 Rand, Rev. Asa  
 Rensselaer, Hon. Stephen von  
 Ridgeley, Rev. G.W.  
 Russell, Wm.  
 Sargent, Nathan  
 Schoolcraft, Henry R.  
 Sharp, Daniel  
 Shattuck, Lemuel S.  
 Shaw, Oliver A.  
 Snelling, G.H.  
 Sumner, Charles  
 Totten, Pres.  
 Upham, Rev. C.W.  
 Vaux, Robert  
 Walker, Rev. James  
 Ward, Malthus A.  
 Ware, Henry  
 Washburn, Emory  
 Wayland, Prof. Francis  
 Webb, Jonathan  
 Webb, Stephen P.  
 Webster, Daniel  
 Weeks, Rev. Dr.  
 White, Hon. Daniel A.  
 Wilder, Jonas  
 Williams, Judge Charles K.  
 Wisner, B.B.  
 Woodbridge, Wm. C.  
 Woods, Alva  
 Yates, Gov. N.Y.





## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Herbert B., Report of Commissioner of Education, 1899-1900, Vol. 1.
- American Institute of Instruction, Proceedings, Boston, 1831-1908.
- American Journal of Education, Boston, 1826-1830. (Fifty-four items)
- American Lyceum, The, Proceedings, Boston, 1831-1833.
- Annals of Education, Boston, 1830-1839. (Seventy-nine items)
- Balch, W. R., Boston Transcript, January, 1921.
- Barnard's American Journal of Education, Hartford, 1856-1882.
- Bunker, F.F., Organization of the Public School System, Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1916, No.8.
- Carter, J.G., Old South Leaflets, Vol.6, No.135.
- Common School Journal, Boston, 1839-1848.
- Connecticut Common School Journal, Hartford, 1838-1842.
- Curtis, Anna L., Who's Who in the Lyceum, 1906.
- Frank, Glenn, The Century Magazine, Vol.98.
- Garnett, Richard, Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson, New York, 1888.
- Higginson, T.W., Atlantic Monthly, Vol.95.
- Hinsdale, B.A., Horace Mann and the Common School Revival in the United States, New York, 1898.
- Hollis, A.P., The Oswego Movement, Boston, 1898.
- Iles, George, The World's Work, Vol.5.
- Luther, Lee, The Dial, Vol.25.
- Nation, The, Editorial, Vol.8.
- Pearson, Paul M., Lippincott's Magazine, Vol.76.
- Pond, James B., Cosmopolitan, Vols.20 and 21.
- Pond, James B., Modern Eloquence, Vol.6, Philadelphia, 1900.
- Powell, E.P., The New England Magazine, New Series, 11.
- Quarterly Register, Boston, 1827-1842.
- Strother, French, The World's Work, Vol.24.

3 0112 099086081



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA